

Chapter Four

Housing

Types of Housing and Housing Density

According to data from the 2000 U.S. Census, the types of housing available in the City of Westminster ranged from single-family detached houses to buildings containing 50 or more housing units (Table 4.1). The highest percentage (29.74%) of unit types by category was the one unit attached category, which includes both duplexes (2 attached single family units) and townhouses or rowhouses (3 or more attached single family units). This category was followed by one unit detached units or single family houses at 28.18% and units in structures containing 10 to 19 total units at 14.04%. Overall, multi-family housing equaled 42.08% of total dwelling units in the City of Westminster.

A marked difference is revealed by comparing the newer developed housing with older housing in the City. The more recent suburban style housing developments, located on the outskirts of Westminster and particularly in the area west of Maryland Route 31, have densities generally ranging from 2 to 8 units per acre, but consist primarily of single family dwellings and townhouses. In addition, there are several multi-family buildings in the more recently developed areas of the City with considerably higher densities. Another key aspect of newer residential development in Westminster is that few non-residential uses are located adjacent or in close proximity to the housing.

Housing located in the older parts of Westminster varies significantly from the newly developed housing in terms of density and the type of housing available. In general, housing in the traditional portion of the City is more dense overall, at 6 units per acre and greater. Additionally, a wide range of housing types are interspersed throughout and adjacent to each other in the older sections of Westminster, including single family houses, duplexes, townhouses, and multi-family dwellings. The multi-family dwellings category encompasses everything from apartment buildings to accessory apartments in owner-occupied dwellings. Throughout the older parts of Westminster and along Main Street in particular, there is a mix of residential and nonresidential uses. In many instances, individual buildings have mixed uses, often with a commercial establishment on the ground floor and apartments located on the upper floors. Residents in this more densely developed portion of Westminster have more opportunities to walk to shops, services, and other activities. Given the projected population and the limited amount of land available for development in Westminster, consideration needs to be given to providing opportunities for housing densities more similar to the densities existing in downtown Westminster.

Table 4.1. Housing Units by Tenure in the City of Westminster, 2000

Units in Structure	Total Units	Percent	Vacant Units	---Occupied Units---		
				Total	Owner	Renter
1, detached	1,994	29.74%	33	1,961	1,737	224
1, attached	1,889	28.18%	50	1,839	1,325	514
2	420	6.26%	92	328	69	259
3 or 4	407	6.07%	16	391	15	376
5 to 9	315	4.70%	32	283	27	256
10 to 19	941	14.04%	73	868	147	721
20 to 49	275	4.10%	0	275	35	240
50 or more	453	6.76%	29	424	69	355
Mobile home	10	0.15%	0	10	0	10
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.00%	0	0	0	0
Total	6,704	100.00%	325	6,379	3,424	2,955

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

Tenure of Housing

The 2000 U.S. Census reported 6,379 occupied housing units in Westminster. Owner occupied units accounted for 53.6% of the units, while renter occupied units equaled 46.3%. These percentages represent a shift in the numbers recorded in 1990 when approximately 56% of the housing units were renter occupied, and 44% of the units were owner occupied. The increase in the percentage of owner occupied housing units can be accounted for by the continued development of the land west of Maryland Route 31.

Information was available for the type of housing as well. The majority of owner occupied dwellings were either one unit detached or one unit attached dwellings. The highest percentage (24.3%) of renter occupied units was in structures containing 10 to 19 units, followed by 17.3% of renters living in one unit attached dwellings.

Comparisons of tenure by the number of persons per housing unit (Table 4.2) and the age of the householder (Table 4.3) were also included in the 2000 U.S. Census. In general, renter occupied housing units tend to have fewer persons per unit and a younger householder than owner occupied units. This information reflects the smaller size of most renter occupied units compared to owner occupied units, and the fact that many young people rent before buying their own homes. There is also a high percentage of householders of 75 years and up who reside in renter occupied units. The projected increase in the population for young adults and senior citizens indicates a future need for additional rental housing.

In response to that growing segment of Westminster's population, The Mayor and Common Council adopted Housing for Older Persons legislation which permits the construction of age restricted apartment units in the City's Business and R-7,500 Residential Zones as special exception uses. The Mayor and Common Council determined that by creating these opportunities, additional home ownership opportunities may be provided to younger families that require more space than older persons. To date, the City has approved one of these developments.

Condition of Housing

The 2000 U.S. Census surveyed several housing characteristics that were related to the condition and quality of housing. The first characteristic was the year in which a residential structure was built (Table 4.4). Over 45% of residential structures in the City of Westminster were built in 1980 or later, and nearly 70% were built since 1970. The majority of these newer structures should be in good condition if normal maintenance has been provided.

Of the remaining structures, over 18% were built between 1940 and 1969, and 18.85% were constructed before 1940. Many of these houses could also be in good condition if maintained properly over the years. However, substandard housing could exist, particularly in the older structures. It should be noted that some of these older buildings have historical value, an issue discussed in detail in *Chapter Seven, Neighborhood Revitalization and Historic Resources*.

Table 4.2. Persons per Housing Unit in the City of Westminster, 2000

	Owner occupied	Renter occupied	All Units
1 person	785	1,342	2,127
2 person	1,144	812	1,956
3 person	606	348	954
4 person	582	276	858
5 person	257	85	342
6 person	36	71	107
7+ person	14	21	35
Total:	3,424	2,955	6,379

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Table 4.3. Tenure by Age of Householder in the City of Westminster, 2000

	Owner occupied	Renter occupied	All Units
15-24	36	321	357
25-34	670	573	1,243
35-44	909	601	1,510
45-54	651	528	1,179
55-59	231	138	369
60-64	154	124	278
65-74	353	221	574
75-84	308	291	599
85+	112	158	270
Total:	3,424	2,955	6,379

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Table 4.4. Year Residential Structure Built in the City of Westminster

Year Built	Total Units	Percent	Vacant	---Occupied Units---		
				Total	Owner	Renter
Built 1999 to March 2000	63	0.94%	26	37	30	7
Built 1995 to 1998	476	7.10%	26	450	348	102
Built 1990 to 1994	1,001	14.93%	19	982	758	224
Built 1980 to 1989	1,712	25.54%	63	1,649	1,033	616
Built 1970 to 1979	940	14.02%	9	931	308	623
Built 1960 to 1969	403	6.01%	17	386	108	278
Built 1950 to 1959	457	6.82%	15	442	214	228
Built 1940 to 1949	388	5.79%	0	388	137	251
Built 1939 or earlier	1,264	18.85%	150	1,114	488	626
Total	6,704	100.00%	325	6,379	3,424	2,955

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Table 4.5. Heating Fuel for Occupied Housing Units in the City of Westminster, 2000

Type of Fuel	Total Units	Percent
Utility gas	1,869	29.30%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	100	1.57%
Electricity	3,525	55.26%
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	807	12.65%
Coal or coke	0	0.00%
Wood	38	0.60%
Solar energy	0	0.00%
Other fuel	40	0.63%
No fuel used	0	0.00%
Total	6,379	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Data from 2000 also indicated that all housing units have complete plumbing facilities and all housing units are heated. The availability of complete plumbing facilities in all housing units was a change from data provided in previous Census reports. The 1970 U.S. Census reported 127 (5.1%) housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities, a figure that decreased to 89 (2.5%) housing units lacking complete plumbing facilities in 1980. In regard to the heating of housing units (Table 4.5), over 50% of units were heated with electricity in 1990. Nearly 30% of units were heated with utility gas, and another 12.65% of units used fuel oil, kerosene, or a similar fuel for heat.

Cost of Housing

The value of housing in the City of Westminster also indicates, to a certain extent, the condition of housing. In 2000, the U.S. Census reported the mean value of all owner occupied housing units as \$146,000. Nearly 30% of all owner occupied housing units were in the \$100,000-\$124,999 category, and another 42% of owner occupied housing was valued at \$125,000 and above (Table 4.6). The value of all housing has risen over the past ten years. In that regard, there is still substandard housing in Westminster. However, there has been additional reinvestment in the older properties in Westminster due to the increasing price of housing and the availability of attractive interest rates. Information describing opportunities, such as tax credit programs, for the rehabilitation of housing stock is included in *Chapter Seven, Neighborhood Revitalization and Historic Resources*.

Also of interest is a 1999 tabulation of selected monthly homeowner costs as a percentage of household income (Table 4.7). In forty percent (40%) of the owner occupied dwellings in

Westminster, less than 20% of household income was spent on housing costs. Another thirty percent (30%) of the City's homeowners spend 20-29% of their household incomes on housing costs. An established guideline is to spend no more than 30% of income on housing. Nonetheless, in thirty percent (30%) of the owner occupied dwellings, 30% or more of household income was being spent on housing. This situation is particularly the case in the \$20,000 to \$49,999 income bracket. The somewhat high percentage of homeowners spending 30% or more of income on housing costs seems to indicate a shortage of affordable housing in the City.

Table 4.6. Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units in the City of Westminster, 2000

Value	Units	Percent
Less than \$10,000	0	0.00%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0	0.00%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	0	0.00%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	0	0.00%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	0	0.00%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	0	0.00%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	0	0.00%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	0	0.00%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	9	0.30%
\$60,000 to \$69,999	29	0.97%
\$70,000 to \$79,999	55	1.84%
\$80,000 to \$89,999	182	6.09%
\$90,000 to \$99,999	548	18.33%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	853	28.54%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	451	15.09%
\$150,000 to \$174,999	327	10.94%
\$175,000 to \$199,999	139	4.65%
\$200,000 to \$249,999	242	8.10%
\$250,000 to \$299,999	104	3.48%
\$300,000 to \$399,999	24	0.80%
\$400,000 to \$499,999	26	0.87%
Total	2,989	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

Table 4.7. Selected Monthly Homeownership Costs as a Percentage

of Household Income in the City of Westminster, 1999

Household Income	0-19%	20-24%	25-29%	30-34%	35%+	Total
Less than \$10,000	8	0	3	0	25	36
\$10,000-\$19,999	46	35	17	18	103	219
\$20,000-\$34,999	118	17	54	48	248	485
\$35,000-\$49,000	114	57	106	125	131	533
\$50,000-\$74,999	286	267	172	64	51	840
\$75,000-\$99,000	288	43	51	35	22	439
\$100,000-\$149,999	282	57	18	0	0	357
\$150,000+	65	8	0	0	0	73
TOTAL	1207	484	421	290	580	2982

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Similar data is available for renter occupied housing units. In 2000, the median gross rent of renter occupied units was reported as \$601 per month, with over 49% of renters paying between over \$600 per month in rent (Table 4.8). As with the owner occupied units there was a small percentage of renter occupied units available for a very low cost. The percentage of units available for less than \$200 per month was 5.5%. Although it is difficult to relate the cost of rental housing to the condition of rental housing due to disparities in unit size and the services included as part of the rental cost, it is possible that renters in these low cost units may be living in substandard housing.

A 1999 comparison of gross rent to household income revealed a polarized situation in the City (Table 4.9). One-third of renters spent less than 20% of household income on rent, while another thirty percent (30%) of renters spent 35% or more of household income on rent. The high ratio of gross rent to income is particularly prevalent in households with incomes under \$20,000. This data is another indication that affordable housing for lower income households is in short supply. In addition, the high cost of rents in Westminster prevents some residents from saving sufficient funds to use as a down payment for the purchase of a house.

Table 4.8. Gross Rent of Renter Occupied Housing Units in the City of Westminster, 2000

Rent	Units	Percent
Less than \$100	49	1.66%
\$100 to \$149	68	2.31%
\$150 to \$199	48	1.63%
\$200 to \$249	93	3.15%
\$250 to \$299	95	3.22%
\$300 to \$349	61	2.07%
\$350 to \$399	107	3.63%
\$400 to \$449	145	4.92%
\$450 to \$499	183	6.21%
\$500 to \$549	320	10.85%
\$550 to \$599	277	9.40%
\$600 to \$649	345	11.70%
\$650 to \$699	226	7.67%
\$700 to \$749	190	6.45%
\$750 to \$799	84	2.85%
\$800 to \$899	164	5.56%
\$900 to \$999	134	4.55%
\$1,000 to \$1,249	257	8.72%
\$1,250 to \$1,499	39	1.32%
\$1,500 to \$1,999	27	0.92%
\$2,000 or more	0	0.00%
No cash rent	36	1.22%
Total	2,948	100.00%
Median Gross Rent	\$601	

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Table 4.9. Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income in the City of Westminster, 1999

Household Income	0-19%	20-24%	25-29%	30-34%	35%+	Total
Less than \$10,000	55	0	65	26	238	384
\$10,000-\$19,999	47	35	80	60	423	645
\$20,000-\$34,999	91	164	163	138	185	741
\$35,000-\$49,000	247	117	75	51	0	490
\$50,000-\$74,999	309	42	17	7	10	385
\$75,000-\$99,000	116	0	0	10	0	126
\$100,000-\$149,999	109	0	0	0	0	109
TOTAL	974	358	400	292	856	2880

Source: U.S. Census, 2000.

Current Housing Programs

The City of Westminster Office of Housing and Community Development administers a number of programs that address affordable housing, as described in the *City of Westminster Section 8 Administrative Plan*. These programs involve federal, state and local programs.

The first program for which the City receives funding is the Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program of the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The City administers three programs under Section 8: the Existing Certificate Program, Housing Vouchers, and the Moderate Rehabilitation Program. The Section 8 Existing Certificate Program currently provides subsidies for 194 very low-income tenants to rent decent, safe, and sanitary housing within the City of Westminster. The Section 8 Housing Voucher Program is similar to the Existing Certificate Program. However, the Housing Voucher Program sets no limit on the rental cost of a unit. If the participating person chooses to rent an apartment that costs more than would be allowed under the Existing Certificate Program, the participant pays the cost differential. The City currently administers 46 Housing Vouchers.

The third program under Section 8 is the Moderate Rehabilitation Program. This program provides subsidized rental for 33 units that are available only to people who qualify under Section 8. As opposed to the above two programs, in which the assistance is tied to the participant, the assistance in the Moderate Rehabilitation Program is tied to the rental unit. The units administered by the City under this program are located in buildings owned by seven different landlords.

The City has also participated for over 15 years in the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. The City is currently eligible to compete for funding under the State of Maryland's Small Cities CDBG Program. Funding is available for housing, infrastructure, economic development, and related activities. The specific areas addressed by the City vary for each grant.

In addition, the City administers a Rehabilitation Assistance Loan Fund, which provides loans for improvements in downtown Westminster. While normally used for facade improvements on downtown commercial buildings, the revolving loan fund is also available for rental housing rehabilitation and the creation of additional housing units for low income people.

Local housing programs in which the City participates include homeless shelters, housing development activities, and assistance to low income families. The City contributes both property and financial assistance to the homeless shelter program operated by the Human Service Programs of Carroll County, Inc., a local nonprofit organization. In terms of housing development, the Administrator of Housing and Community Development works with a variety of local individuals and organizations to create additional affordable housing. The assistance provided ranges from technical assistance to packaging financing for both new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings. Assistance to low-income families is provided through cooperative efforts with local nonprofit and civic organizations. Services include emergency assistance of food, security deposits, utility assistance, and clothing.

In addition to the City's housing programs, the Carroll County Board of Commissioners appointed an Affordable Housing Ad-Hoc Committee in the spring of 1995, which included three City staff members. This Committee was directed to define affordable housing and provide suggestions for adjusting the zoning and permitting policies to allow for the construction of quality affordable housing.

In August of 1995, the Affordable Housing Ad-Hoc Committee produced the *Affordable Housing Report*, which included several recommendations. The first recommendation focused on the quality of affordable housing and encouraged the enforcement of existing regulations, such as zoning, health, and minimum livability codes, to assure that existing housing is safe and sanitary. Another recommendation involved rental housing and suggested changes in zoning regulations to allow accessory dwelling units (apartments) in existing residences, and to provide sufficient areas for the development of apartment buildings.

The final recommendation in the *Affordable Housing Report* addressed the establishment of a moderately priced dwelling unit (MPDU) program in the County. MPDU's could be achieved through a mandatory requirement in new developments or through a voluntary program. In either case, incentives such as higher density would be provided to developers, and flexible zoning regulations to allow a mix of housing types should be considered.

Housing Needs

The *City of Westminster 1995 Community Development Plan*, developed by the City Office of Housing, Community Development and Personnel, identified a number of housing needs that are still applicable. The entire *City of Westminster Community Development Plan* is incorporated into the *City of Westminster Comprehensive Plan* by reference. The following is an excerpt from the *1995 Community Development Plan*.

The lack of affordable housing is a major issue in the City. New construction is occurring at a rapid pace - single-family homes, for-sale townhouses and condominiums, and apartments - but the cost of land and construction requires selling prices and rents to be in the high end of the market. Local wages have not been rising in proportion to housing costs, so each year the housing situation becomes more acute. It is frequently commuters from outside Carroll County or two income families that can afford the housing units being added to the market. Meanwhile, the resident population is having an increasingly difficult time finding affordable places to live when they need to move due to family or job changes or other reasons.

The production of new, affordable housing is essential for the City to serve both the rental and for-sale markets. Available housing must be decent, safe and sanitary. Strategies must be developed to assure the shelter needs of the very poor, the working poor, those with limited incomes, and the disappearing middle class. Housing for the higher income bracket appears to be the only housing production taken on by the profit motivated market.

The City's homeless problem is less obvious to a casual visitor than it might appear in larger cities, but it is a very real and growing problem. People often move from one friend to another friend's house unable to find or afford a home, or they may use one of the local shelters. While the current shelters do not turn away large numbers of people, they frequently work at capacity. Construction or rehabilitation of further facilities for temporary shelter may be necessary in the near future. Of particular concern is the need for a Drop-in shelter or Safe Haven facility that currently does not exist. In addition, efforts will be made to improve and enlarge the Shelter for Intact Families. The City will continue to use local funds to contribute toward the local shelter system.

In most cases, shelters are not considered an end point. They are considered a beginning from which a resident is expected to find a permanent home. However, even with professional staff assistance, many single people and families find it nearly impossible to find permanent housing during a brief shelter stay. Transitional housing needs to be created to fill that gap. No transitional housing exists in the City at this time. Once developed, it would ease the burden on some of the neediest of our population. The City will be an active partner in any partnership designed to provide transitional housing opportunities for single individuals and families.

The majority of the lower rent apartments in Westminster are in older buildings. Rents are often kept low by deferring routine maintenance. Other units are substandard because the owner cannot afford repairs. Rehabilitation loan and grant programs exist on the State level, but these programs have been inadequately promoted locally. In addition, processing time is often too slow for response to urgent needs such as leaking roofs and faulty furnaces. While the City adopted a minimum Livability Code, few tenants are aware of its standards or feel they can complain without retribution. To help alleviate these problems, an informational program should be started to spread the word about the availability of State rehabilitation funds. Also, tracking the Livability Code enforcement and violations within the City could

help determine if more local effort should be made in this area. In addition, the City recently adopted an ordinance allowing City involvement with the securing, improving, or demolition of uninhabitable abandoned structures. The enforcement of this ordinance should have a desirable impact on older neighborhoods in the City.

The changing role of women in the workplace has impacted the availability of rooming houses for lower income, single Westminster residents. Most of the former rooming houses were run by women, now elderly and retiring. A new generation of rooming house owners has not appeared, and a valuable element of the housing stock is being lost. Ensuring the full diversity of affordable housing choices for our residents will be a special effort of the City.

Among the special populations with housing needs are the elderly who are no longer able to live independently, yet not so frail that full nursing care is needed. While adequate housing appears to exist for middle and upper income elderly, there is a lack of choices for low and moderate-income elderly in and near Westminster. The City plans to address a part of this need with the adaptive reuse of the West End School.

Homeownership has traditionally been a way for families to move ahead and secure a future. This has become increasingly difficult for middle income families, and virtually impossible for limited income and low income families. Partnerships between builders/developers, government, and nonprofit organizations may be key to the production of new for-sale units for low and moderate income families. The City will strive to be an active part of any such partnerships.

In addition to the housing needs identified in the *1995 Community Development Plan*, two additional needs have been identified. The first of these involves lack of diversity. The need for greater diversity in housing types throughout the City was identified in the *1995 Community Development Plan*. However, there is also a need for greater diversity within individual neighborhoods. Neighborhood diversity would involve a mix of housing types, such as single family attached and detached houses and multifamily dwellings, as well as a mix of renter occupied and owner occupied dwellings.

The second need that has been identified is a need for general maintenance of all residential buildings regardless of the type of housing or whether an owner or a tenant occupies the building. Maintenance is intended to cover a broad range of issues from routine maintenance and general appearance of residential structures and properties to the correction of potential safety problems. To address this issue, The Mayor and Common Council have adopted a Property Maintenance Code for all residential units. This Ordinance requires that the exterior of each structure be well maintained.

Goals and Objectives

As a result of the identified needs described above, the following goals and objectives have been developed for housing in the City of Westminster. In addition, a series of recommended actions were developed and can be found in *Chapter Fourteen, Plan Implementation*.

Goal 1: Provide adequate housing for residents of Westminster.
(Also see Goal 2 in *Chapter 8, Land Use*.)

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Provide a sufficient quantity of safe, sanitary, adequate, and affordable housing.
 - a. Enforce the Livability Code as described in Goal 4, herein.
 - b. Complete the actions that address affordable housing.
2. Support the Fair Housing Act, which states that neither race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or handicap should prevent any person from residing anywhere in the Westminster area.
 - a. Strictly enforce the Fair Housing Act.
 - b. Educate tenants regarding the applicability of the Fair Housing Act.
3. Encourage the continuation of the availability of a diversity of housing types, both City-wide and in individual neighborhoods.
 - a. Streamline the process for the approval of Planned Development applications.
 - b. Support and encourage developments offering mix of residential uses.
 - c. Provide opportunities for the construction of compatible infill within the older parts of Westminster and the development of neotraditional type neighborhoods on vacant land.
 - d. Include language in the residential zoning districts that specifically addresses accessory apartments and the conversion of accessory buildings to dwelling units.
 - e. Develop design guidelines for townhouses and single-family detached houses, such as varying setbacks between adjacent units,

as well as variation in architectural treatment, in order to address concerns regarding compatibility within or adjacent to existing neighborhoods.

Goal 2: Provide adequate shelter for the City's homeless population.

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Provide adequate cold weather shelter for the City's homeless population.
 - a. Monitor the use of the existing cold weather shelter, so that the need for expansion or additional shelters can be anticipated.
 - b. Identify potential locations for additional cold weather shelters.
2. Improve and enlarge the Shelter for Intact Families.
 - a. Provide additional play space for children at the Shelter for Intact Families.
 - b. Expand the capacity of the Shelter for Intact Families.
3. Develop transitional housing programs for people who need assistance in securing permanent housing.
 - a. Identify the necessary facilities for a transitional housing program.
 - b. Identify suitable locations for transitional housing.

Goal 3: Provide a full diversity of affordable housing choices.

(Also see Goal 2 in *Chapter 8, Land Use*.)

Objectives and recommended actions:

1. Encourage new multi-family housing with affordable rents.
 - a. Identify opportunities for tax-exempt bond financing.
 - b. Encourage developers to devote 20 to 50 percent of rental units for use by lower income persons.
 - c. Allow density bonuses for providing lower income units.

- d. Create a multi-family zoning district in the zoning text.
 - e. Identify sites to zone for multi-family development which are close to existing community services.
- 2. Seek opportunities for homeownership among low and moderate income households.
 - a. Use Community Development Block Grant funds for write down of land or infrastructure cost for developments which allow for a minimum 20 percent lower income occupancy.
 - b. Allow density bonuses for providing lower income units.
- 3. Promote development which does not segregate housing for low to moderate income families into enclaves.
 - a. Streamline the process for the approval of Planned Development applications, which include development offering a mix of residential uses and a variety of housing types.
- 4. Provide affordable housing that meets the special needs of the low and moderate income, elderly residents of Westminster.
 - a. Encourage developers to devote 20 to 50 percent of senior rental units for use by lower income persons.
 - b. Allow density bonuses for providing lower income units.

Goal 4: Require that all residential buildings and properties in Westminster are properly maintained.

(Similar to Goal 4 in *Chapter 5, Economic Development*.)

Objectives and recommended actions:

- 1. Inform property owners about the availability of local, state, and federal programs for the improvement of property.
 - a. Develop informational materials about property improvement programs, and distribute materials directly to residential property owners.

- b. Sponsor information sessions regarding programs for the improvement of property.
- 2. Promote tax incentives programs for the rehabilitation of historic properties.
 - a. Develop informational materials about Federal, State and Local tax incentive programs and distribute materials directly to historic property owners.
 - b. Sponsor information sessions regarding tax incentive programs.
- 3. Create a Nuisance Abatement Ordinance to Ensure Problem Houses are in compliance with City Codes.
 - a. Cooperate with local law enforcement agencies to identify "Nuisance" Properties.
 - b. Create a system that encourages owners of "Nuisance" properties to abate further problems.
- 5. Use the City's ability to secure or improve uninhabitable abandoned structures with significant historic value, rather than allowing these structures to be demolished.
 - a. Monitor the condition and occupancy of at risk buildings with significant historic value.
 - b. Develop public-private partnerships as appropriate in order to preserve important structures.